(e) The Ministry has taken following action in this regard:—

(i) **Inadmissible Connectivity**:— Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Orissa, Punjab and Sikkim have been asked to fix responsibility for the omission.

(ii) **Multi-connectivity**:— In all the cases pointed out by Audit, except Tamil Nadu, the works pertain to Phase-I and II when the Core Network was not in place. During these two phases instances of multi-connectivity have been found. In Tamil Nadu there is a case of multi-connectivity in the III phase and the State has been asked to fix responsibility for the lapse.

(iii) As intimated by the States, the cases of repairs pointed by audit are actually cases of upgradation of through routes which is eligible for funding under the guidelines.

The Ministry has noted the suggestion of the Committee, which have been helpful in further improvement and streamlining of procedures.

NREGA in Himachal Pradesh

1833. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that earlier NREGA was implemented only in two Districts of Himachal Pradesh and later it was extended to two more districts only;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to implement of NREGA in rest of the districts of Himachal Pradesh;

(c) the names of districts in which Government plan to implement NREGA in near future;

(d) whether Government propose to implement NREGA in all the districts of Himachal Pradesh; and

(e) if so, the time limit stipulated by the Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) Yes, Sir. NREGA was implemented in Chamba and Sirmaur districts of Himachal Pradesh with effect from 2.2.2006 and two more districts namely Mandi and Kangra were included under the Act with effect from 1.4.2007.

(b) to (e) All the remaining rural areas of Himachal Pradesh have been covered under NREGA with effect from 1.4.2008.

Non-inclusion of Madhubani in flood affected area in Bihar

†1834. SHRI RAJNITI PRASAD: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether it is a fact that the Principal Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Government of Bihar *vide* their letter No. 12360 dated 04.09.2008 has made the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India aware of 14 districts of the State being affected by flood in which Madhubani district has not been included;

(b) whether it is also a fact that dozens of villages which include Ramnagar, Nanpatti, Shuriyahe, Parsha, Mujiyashi *etc.* under Phulparas block, are badly affected by the river Bhutahi Balan in Madhubani district this year also like before; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA PATIL): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Rural Development has received a letter No. 12360 dated 4.9.2008 from Principal Secretary, Rural Development, Government of Bihar, regarding advance release of 2nd instalment of Central funds to 14 very severely flood affected districts of Bihar. Accordingly, the Ministry of Rural Development has released 2nd advance instalment of Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) funds, amounting to Rs. 389.49 crore. The Madhubani district was not among the very severely affected districts for which advance release of 2nd installment under IAY had been requested by the State Government.

Expanding National Old Age Pension Scheme to BPL families

1835. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:
SHRI DARA SINGH:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to expand "National Old Age Pension Scheme" so as to cover all families Below the Poverty Line; and

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the minimum amount of pension Government propose to give to BPL or contemplating to increase the amount of pension being paid to them today?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The eligibility criteria under National Old Age Pension Scheme has been modified to include all persons who are 65 years or higher and belonging to a household below the poverty line, according to the criteria prescribed by the Government of India. The Scheme has been renamed as 'Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme' (IGNOAPS) and launched on 19th November, 2007. Under IGNOAPS, Central Assistance of Rs. 200 per month per beneficiary is provided to eligible persons. Presently there is no proposal to increase the amount of pension.

Deficiency in rural sanitation scheme

1836. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state: